

From: Scott Fenton
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 4:40pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sir/Madam:

If you have any idea how grossly inadequate the penalties levied at Microsoft's abuse of the anti-trust statutes are, you would feel compelled to make every effort to increase the severity of settlement.

As the president of a California-headquartered investment company, Lodestar Capital Group, Inc., I am an otherwise disinterested party in the settlement. I can say, though, that for the six years our corporation has been in business, we have had to struggle with the enormous drag on productivity that Microsoft's stranglehold on the marketplace for computer operating-system [O/S], as well as for application-software.

We have never been able to buy a computer without their operating system, even though half the machines in the house run under Unix or Linux, because they have forced vendors to only offer their operating system through selective contracts. We are then forced to throw out the software and manuals that we have just paid for, before installing the other operating systems such that we can continue our business. This is, in essence, a Bill Gates Tax.

But the lingering effects go further. Because we are forced to buy an O/S that we do not want or use--because of Microsoft's monopolistic abuses--we also invalidate part of our warranty and our technical help contract for the hardware we buy. It's one of several examples of this kind of insidious malignancy that the current settlement inadequately addresses.

Microsoft's products are poor and unreliable, but we in the business community are forced to buy them because of the illegal muscle they have applied to marketplace. We all end up paying a price for the substantial loss in productivity and increase in cost from this inefficiency.

I am more than happy to give any further testimony or evidence to strengthen the penalties against this monopolistic corporation.

Scott Fenton
President & CEO
Lodestar Capital Group, Inc.

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